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FEBRUARY 23, 2024 | VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 5

YOUR PURCHASE BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
PLEASE BUY ONLY FROM BADGED VENDORS.

Geezers hook up for Groundcover.
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VENDOR:
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GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



Parts of my
history.
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La Shawn Courtwright at Union Station in Washington, D.C. during her trip for the Poor People's Campaign March on Washington in June 2022.

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM

venmo



@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

Hear Me Out: EBT should allow the purchase of hot, prepared meals

Those stuck in poverty and homelessness suffer in all categories of life, but when it comes to food and proper nutrition, I feel like they suffer the most. Gas stations and convenience stores that accept EBT (governmental food purchasing assistance) play a part in this suffering because the lack of fresh food encourages the consumption of processed foods, which leads to health problems.

People experiencing poverty and homelessness often live in places called “food deserts.” A food desert is an area that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food. People who live in these areas have no other choice but to shop at the neighborhood gas stations and corner stores. Not only are the poor being under-served, but also overcharged for the products they purchase at these establishments. For



MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

example, a bottle of water along with other items will cost twice as much at some gas station/corner store than it would at a major retailer like Walmart, Kroger or even Whole Foods.

41.2 million people in 21.6 million households received SNAP (which is the same as EBT) in America in 2022.

Currently in Michigan, 710,500 households including more than 531,000 children receive SNAP. SNAP operates in all 50 states and is utilized frequently by individuals and families.

I had a chance to interview individuals (who are the heads of their households) who receive SNAP benefits. I asked them two questions: Would you like to be able to purchase a hot prepared meal with your EBT card? And do you think you live in an area or neighborhood that provides affordable, nutritious food?

I talked to an unhoused person who did not want his name to be disclosed and he said, “Yes, because when you're unhoused, you do not have anywhere to cook and to prepare the food.” For the second question he answered, “No, in the Ann Arbor downtown area, the gas

stations and corner stores that accept EBT do not sell fresh food items such as fruits and vegetables.”

Jim Dooley (aka Country), who lives in Ypsilanti Township said yes, he would like to be able to purchase a hot meal with his EBT card. And for the second question he answered “No, I am currently housed and disabled in a wheelchair with no transportation. The bus stop is half a mile away, so I have no other choice but to shop at these two stores in front of my apartment complex that both accept EBT cards. There is a corner store that prepares hot meals, and a gas station. I would like to purchase a hot meal at the corner store, but cannot purchase hot food with my EBT card.”

Based on these responses, it seems clear that it would be beneficial if EBT allowed purchase of hot food.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes toward production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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| 1/6 | \$145.00 | \$200.00 | 5 X 4 |
| 1/4 | \$200.00 | \$265.00 | 5 X 6.25 |
| 1/2 | \$375.00 | \$500.00 | 5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5 |
| full page | \$650.00 | \$900.00 | 10.25 X 13 |

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Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR



Tre McAlister,
vendor No. 519

In one sentence, who are you? Who am I not? I am a leader in the world and strive for all of our success.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover News? I usually sell near the Blind Pig, People's Food Co-op and Old Town.

What's the best way to start the day? Brush your teeth, facial cleanse and head to get coffee.

What words do you live by? “Promise me you'll be great” or “Bling Blow Wow.”

What is something about you that someone on the street wouldn't know? What my closet actually looks like and that I am vegetarian.

What motivates you to work selling Groundcover News? I like getting feedback from our readers. That, plus when shoppers are just as excited for new papers as vendors are.

What is the best and worst thing about selling Groundcover? Best: I get a break from the troubles of life. Worst: Just bad weather.

What was your first job? McDonald's and Hollister in high school.

What are your hobbies? Photography, cooking, nature scene and gym.

What's the most impressive thing you know how to do? Rap or do 100+ reps on most exercises.

What changes would you like to see in Washtenaw County? More work programs and college recruiting to go back to school.

Homeless

Being homeless, I've seen many new things, many people being there for one another, even treating each other as family. Those with money pretend like you don't exist, like they are from another world completely – some act like they are simply better than us. I've seen churches helping but only to a certain extent. I've seen churches say on signs how they are open to all but aren't. I've seen only men sleeping there get treated like kings and lez couples treated like they don't count. My lez partner is my superman; stayed up past midnight a few nights just to protect us and keep from us getting robbed

I've seen one guy in front of me



SHAWN SWOFFER
Groundcover vendor No. 574

OD. I've witnessed so many things — one guy got his throat slashed because of an opinion. I've seen a couple guys get caught trying to rob us while we slept.

We've stayed with lots of people and they always had a hidden

I'm ashamed of this world

I'm ashamed of this world. So many prejudiced people have torn this world apart; I feel that this is not a good thing for the upbringing of our kids. We need to love one another and stop hating our skin color — my heart cries out for the unspoken and people who can't cry out loud. They act as if you don't even exist. They're mean and hateful, but late at night if we cut ourselves, we all bleed the same. Couldn't we straighten it out and make it a better world where we could raise our kids to love one another more?

There's people that are starving, then go to jail for stealing when they simply need some help with food. Sometimes it's bills, house payments or child support. It is hard to get a job these days, sometimes because of your skin color. Although it's easier than at some previous times in history, it still may not always work. It can still be hard sometimes to just be yourself, but at the end of the day we're all human beings.

I feel that it's God who created this world, he created humanity and just



JOCELIN BOYD
Groundcover vendor No. 85

because our skin may differ it shouldn't matter. It is awesome too that some of us are doing our best to help with hatred. We need to understand each other and have open communication and be responsible for what we do if we see somebody that's prejudiced.

If you can help, it's important especially for being human because we're entitled to make mistakes and we're also entitled to have a second chance at life. Please, when you see someone having a hard day, talk to them and let them know that they're special and let them know that they're human and if they're suffering because someone has hurt them

agenda. We stayed at one place to wake up to find my shoes gone but once my partner got involved they mysteriously showed up. My grandkid's present for her birthday disappeared too. How could anybody do a thing like that to a three-year-old? We had to sleep with a pedophile unknown to us.

Try to survive under zero degree weather overnight! It rained on us for four hours or more. We trusted some people and they took a bite out of us many times but we still survived because we had each other. We endured everything because together we could conquer all. We were badass because we survived by ourselves.

because of their skin color, tell them it shouldn't matter. Tell them that it's okay and it's not like it's going to be the end of the world. But if we don't do anything about it, humanity is going to go down the drain, then what do we do?

I'm of mixed race — actually I'm Creole — and when I was selling Groundcover all by myself, I had a couple of white people approach me and call me the N-word. This happened twice. Can this really be the kind of world we want everyone to survive in? Of course not, that should have never happened in Kerrytown or anywhere else. My story that I tell you is real. I was beaten up, put in the hospital and some of the people in my situation never make it. This is not fair, why are people hurting people?

I'm ashamed of this world. We need to come together and tell each other that we love each other and that we want the whole world to do the same. This world will be a better place if we all come together and beat the skin color war.

PEOPLE'S PEACE BANK

an invitation from Ken Parks, Groundcover vendor No. 490

Study and working group on the work of Richard Werner and the Valhalla Network, a DAO (Decentralized Autonomous Organization).

Let's meet on Earth Day, April 22, 2024 at 4 p.m. at the Groundcover office (in the basement of Bethlehem United Church of Christ at 423 S. 4th Ave) to view Werner's conversation at the Capital Club Dubai on Central Bank Digital Currencies.

Assault at Delonis Center challenges promise of safe overnight environment

Naylor Dundee, 58, was sleeping at the Delonis overnight warming center when he was awakened with a punch to the face. It was 3 a.m., December 31, 2023.

"I thought it was a dream, and that I was in a car accident. I had to open my eyes, or die. He used brass knuckles, hitting me two or three times. By the time one of the staff came over, I was already bloodied.

"[Staff] called the ambulance. [Police] didn't arrest him. He was taking a shower when I got in the ambulance. He stayed at the shelter that night, without trespass.

"The police told me he was going to be arrested and then the police came to the hospital and talked to me. They tried to tell me that I **didn't** want him arrested.

"This same night, [AAPD] told me to wait to contact them again for two months. If they gave me a reason, I don't remember. I didn't do it, I waited to contact them again the next day. It felt like they wanted it to fall through the cracks. I know time is the enemy, especially when I wasn't getting any help from the Delonis staff.

"I asked one of my case workers, 'Why hasn't anyone representing the shelter said I'm sorry this happened to you?' And when she told me that wouldn't be happening, I filed a grievance. Nobody, still, has talked to me.

"Delonis needs to be held accountable. They don't want anyone to know



LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

about it.

"I have a permanent stutter because of this. My face and body twitches. I need oral surgery. I don't feel comfortable at all here [Ann Arbor]. Enough is enough."

Naylor struggles to speak in the interview. His balance is thrown off and he often falls simply standing up straight. I [Lindsay] observe bruises and lesions that Dundee attributes to recent falls post-assault.

"This will affect every aspect of my life. And let's be honest, it was already too much to handle. This has changed my life forever. I can't play the piano anymore. I am a singer, and can't do that anymore. Somebody has to pay for this. Something's going on with my brain.

"I only had known [the assailant] for three weeks. He's never said anything to me. He never responded. I never thought he would do what he did. He could have killed me.

"The Police Department was not

responding either, so I had to take care of myself. I went to the courthouse and petitioned for them to get me a Personal Protective Order. By the time I called a lawyer, he said I had done everything I needed to do.

"A safe environment is promised at the Delonis Center. It was not a safe environment."

When asked about the details of this assault, the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County could not speak to specific incidents involving clients due to confidentiality agreements.

Groundcover News asked SAWC Executive Director Dan Kelly what efforts the shelter has made to reduce assaults and contribute to a safe environment for clients.

He replied, "First off, we take all incidents of violence very seriously and restrict access for folks who commit violent behaviors — which often means trespassing them from the shelter. One of our top goals is to be a safe place, while still being low-barrier — regardless of [clients'] background, drug use ...

"We work very closely with local authorities [AAPD] and only want them in seriously violent situations. We have on-site security to help us respond. We have a proactive internal response system for health and safety — a health and safety coordinator and a mental health coordinator. To stop issues from happening in the future, all staff are trained on de-escalation,

CPR, first aid, Narcan.

"Another thing that we also take seriously is lifting restrictions. We use a community based model; we have a grievance committee of formerly homeless individuals and staff.

"If the client has a grievance, they can file it, no matter what it is. Anonymously or not. Most of them are trespass lift requests.

"The need is so high that we choose to not turn anyone away. We know Delonis Center is not big enough. There are too many people. We need space for more residential-style programs.

"It's a balancing act. Having everything in one place sometimes can cause issues, and we see that in the winter.

"We did plan for record numbers. We opened the off-site Ypsi location that is open seven days a week, and we are trying to add more, to have more space, more dignified space, more choice. I wish we had beds for everyone so we don't need to have congregate shelter.

"The men's rotating program is a high barrier program. If we had more resources, we would have more sites that serve specialized groups — for recuperative care (only eight beds), women and people in recovery."

Nowadays, Naylor stays at the men's overnight rotating shelter where he has found a more peaceful environment. This off-site shelter closes April 1.



Flats used for Housing First in Finland are built alongside other types of housing to build community spirit and make the transition into mainstream society an easier process. The setup also offers employment opportunities. Photo credit: Y-Foundation, the Big Issue UK

Homelessness is a crisis in America: lessons from Finland's housing policy

More than 300 mayors arrived in Washington, D.C. on January 16, 2004 for five days of meetings as part of the 92nd annual United States Conference of Mayors. They talked to lawmakers, the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor and the U.S. President about important issues which affect their cities. Among the issues on their agenda were the homelessness crisis, violent crimes and public safety, dangerous drugs across the southern border, severe mental illness, anti-semitism and Islamophobia.

With regards to homelessness, the mayors who appeared on national TV broadcasts (ABC, CBS, NBC, MSNBC) said that they wanted to ask lawmakers and the President to provide more support to HUD — the United States Department for Housing and Urban Development. The mayors said that they want more affordable housing for low-income people and people experiencing homelessness.

The reality today is that the American Rescue Plan which was designed to help Americans deal with the challenges of COVID-19 has expired. Most of the emergency assistance and protection for rent and shelter were not reauthorized. In early 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration launched the Housing Americans Initiative. The HUD program sent out 75,000 emergency Section 8 housing vouchers to local governments to be distributed to people experiencing homelessness in their jurisdictions. Mayors were asked to do more by working with private sector developers to increase the supply of low-income affordable housing.

What is the key reason for our



WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

affordable housing crisis and homelessness? Many housing policy experts blame the Faircloth Amendment of 1998. This amendment to the New Deal era 1937 National Housing Policy Act forbids HUD from building new low-income affordable housing which would have increased the supply of housing in cities where rent is high, eviction is high and housing demand pressure is exponential.

Research evidence, including studies from HUD, shows that more than 582,000 residents of American cities are homeless. HUD's "Point-In-Time" homeless data shows that hundreds of thousands of individuals and families are unsheltered and sleeping in street encampments and public recreational parks or under bridges. Some community observers say that a more troubling phenomenon now is the growing number of homeless families with infants and school-aged children.

Another aggravating factor highlighted by the mayors is the busing of asylum-seeking migrants from Texas to northern cities such as New York, Chicago, Denver and Washington, D.C. The governor of Texas boasted that he had shipped more than 92,000 migrants to "blue cities" and plans to keep sending tens of

thousands of migrants to northern cities as if they are human cargo. Mayors of urban cities along with county commissioners, policy makers and homelessness advocates, have searched for good models for ending homelessness.

Alexandra's Comments on Finland's Housing First Policy

Alexandra Granberg is a native of Finland. She has lived in the states for the past two and half years. She visited Finland last summer. Her testimony below is based on her eye-witness account and research on the topic of homelessness in Finland.

"The policy that's been implemented in Finland since 2008, called 'Housing First' is not unique to Finland. It has been tested in some other European countries as well. In my understanding, this means housing (as a constitutional guarantee) is provided directly to a person who is homeless. As the name implies, housing comes first and any other assistance or needed treatment follows after. Prevention and direct housing plus a support system with wraparound services are included in this model. Before this policy, housing was provided only after any underlying health condition like alcoholism or drug-addiction was treated. In other words, a person was required to "get their lives together" before they could obtain housing, apparently called the 'Staircase Model.'

"With the housing first policy, the government converted some shelters into housing units, and

see **FINLAND** page 8 ➡

What's Happening at the Ann Arbor District Library

Open 10am-8pm Daily

Hang out in any of our five locations across town, browsing books, magazines, newspapers, and more, or check out movies, CDs, art prints, musical instruments, and home tools—you name it! Study and meeting rooms, fast and free WiFi, and plenty of places to sit and hang out.

Ann Arbor 200

2024 marks the 200th anniversary of Ann Arbor's founding. To mark this occasion, AADL is undertaking a project called Ann Arbor 200. Throughout 2024, there will be 200 digital content releases exploring topics from Ann Arbor's history. Visit aadl.org/annarbor200 to learn more and check out the growing collection.

Public Computers

The AADL has public-access Internet computers available for use by both cardholders and non-cardholders at all five locations. Each station has USB ports, headphone jacks, and some of the fastest wifi speeds in town!

FEATURED EVENT



Mario Day Celebration

Sunday, March 17 • 11:00am-4pm
Downtown Library

Celebrate Super Mario Day at the Library with a packed day of fun for fans of all ages. Compete in our Mario Kart tournament, conquer live-action balloon battles, and end the day with a screening of *The Super Mario Bros. Movie!* Check out aadl.org/marioday for more.

Hey You!

Do you like people?

Do you like serving the homeless?

Do you like saving lives?

Join Weather Amnesty today!

Ann Arbor Weather Amnesty is an overnight respite program December to April from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. the following morning. Currently, we are open four days a week, but with your help, we can provide this service all seven days! We need volunteers to cover evening and overnight shifts caring for people currently experiencing homelessness.

Training provided.

Please contact Rose 734-945-7825 or Cynthia 231-670-6059 for more information.



Left: Crowd dancing underneath the disco ball to Jive Colossus. Right: Groundcover vendors Joe Woods (pictured left) and Derek Allen (pictured right) outside the venue welcoming attendees.

Geezers hook up for Groundcover

ROBBIE FEBRUARY
Groundcover contributor

Romance and Aqua Velva were in the air in early February as two elder organizational scenesters embraced for a few fleeting hours at a fundraiser at LIVE nightclub at the corner of First and Huron. It was the Early Bird Special of club nights; with an art auction, two bands, and multiple speakers all wrapping up by 9 p.m. The event was a certified hit and would have made Ed Sullivan return to “The Toast of the Town” with his tail tucked. Groundcover issues, merchandise and art were snapped up en masse by the finely aged crowd. It made for a highly successful event which I was happy to participate in.

The Venue

LIVE Nightclub and its competent and charismatic staff were excellent hosts for the event. The ample dance floor was packed with both Groundcover supporters and a bevy of gyrating grandparents.

When I first lived in Ann Arbor, the venue was called Live at PJ’s and had a separate bar called Goodnight Gracie in the basement. My first forays into the establishment in the early 2000s left a fair amount to be desired. It had a grimy 90s feel to it, the sound system was hanging in there with duct tape, and the aura was a shade past threatening.

Twenty years later, I was impressed with improvements. The nightclub is owned and run by a handful of local businessmen who have found a lot of success in the last decade. This group, Watershed Hospitality, has some great things to say about their intentions. “The establishments we own and operate are as unique and eclectic as the customers we serve. But the unifying motivation for all the food and drinks we create, or spaces we design, is to make it memorable, make it lasting, maybe even historic. Hence, Watershed Hospitality Group: named both

for the place we work — Huron River Watershed — and for the goal of creating moments that help define the social culture of our colleagues, town and community.”

LIVE nightclub is the shining cornerstone of a multiblock entertainment district and will continue to provide excellent experiences for Geezers and non-geezers alike for many years to come.

The Geezers

Born in the 1970s, the “Ann Arbor Happy Hour” traversed many venues before arriving at LIVE nightclub. It has been organized by Randy Tessier for the last twenty years.

He is a larger than life English professor at the University of Michigan. His students think very highly of him. He currently has a 100% “would take again” rating on Rate My Professor dot com, a website that has been helping students pick classes from the dawn of the internet. One student left this review. “A very chill professor! He really likes to talk about world events and get a grasp of what our generation thinks of certain topics in the media. Really down to earth and wants to see you do well in his class.” His rise to academia was on a non-standard path and he is a really great role model for many people who are seeking opportunities to do what they love no matter where they currently are in life. The “Geezer Dance Party” hit a cultural zenith as Covid protocols started relaxing in early 2023. An article in the New York Times called it “the coolest rock show in Ann Arbor.” Many other groups took notice nationwide and the durable dance phenomenon is spreading.

The Bands

What is a wild blue-hair-filled dance party without music? It is like one hand clapping at a silent disco. Luckily, we had The Switchbacks and Jive Colossus to stave off our existential ennui. The Switchbacks bill themselves as “a

character-filled six-piece musical ensemble hailing from the Ann Arbor area. We like to groove. We like to have fun.” A hard-rocking country and blues quintet fronted by vocalist Janet Benson, they commanded the dance floor with many funky hits. Hip replacements or not, the groove inspired gyrations that nine out of ten doctors would approve of.

After a not-so-brief interlude where Groundcover Director Lindsay Calka spoke about the amazing work and opportunities Groundcover provides in the Ann Arbor region, Jive Colossus took the stage. The 11-piece, horn-driven Afrobeat, Funk, R&B, Jazz & Caribbean band were a force to be reckoned with. As the dance floor vibrated with a beat so deep that some attendees harkened back to the 1975 sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald, one couldn’t help but become wistful at the generational gap shrinking before our very eyes.

The Art

Two paintings were created to be auctioned off at the event. Local artist T’onna Clemons provided her unique style and viewpoints to the pieces. Her interview with “Canvas Rebel” states: “T’onna Clemons is an Ann Arbor-based freelance painter/ muralist and originally a graphic designer. She has been traveling around the world for the past several years, gaining experience in mediums such as oil, gouache, acrylic, watercolor and welding. She has continued to use these skills to develop her own style of mixed media



Jive Colossus performing at LIVE nightclub. T’onna Clemmons’ Groundcover News art piece was set up onstage with the band.

and futuristic textures that she is now known for. T’onna’s style focuses on conveying and capturing the emotions of the African American experience currently in America.” I first became familiar with her work with the Black Lives Matter murals outside of the Ann Arbor District Library and was excited to see what she would bring for the event. The first piece depicts an older couple celebrating in a bar. With excellent use of color and form, the spirit of “Geezer Happy Hour” is captured in a way that only T’onna could depict. The second piece speaks directly to Groundcover’s efforts to give voice to underserved populations in the Ann Arbor Area. The artist herself speaks to this in the aforementioned interview.

“Being from Ann Arbor I have found it is extremely hard to be a success as an African American in any facet, especially art. I have been successful in other states in regards to my art but never in the state or town I was raised in. I want to be able to be a success and open doors so that people who look like me will not have to struggle or have as hard of a time as I do/did,” she stated. Both pieces sold well at the silent auction and contributed to an amazing event.

The Summation

Randy Tessier said it well during our interview. “We LIVE folks, and we are a kindly and caring contingent, were thrilled to be a part of something that speaks to the role of community responsibility toward all who make up our citizenry. When I was asked about LIVE playing a role in supporting Groundcover News, how could we not? We see any endeavor that promotes a way of self-determination for those of us who may be between jobs, without other means of material support, and looking for a home, as not our moral choice but our moral duty. Thanks for allowing LIVE to participate.”

Through their actions, the participants shone a light on the important work of Groundcover News and inspire others to join them in the fight for a more just and equitable society.

As the night came to an end, the echoes of their voices lingered, reminding us all of the power of collective action to effect change.

Undercover art intel: The amazing artist Paul Wertz

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

Paul Wertz discovered his amazing art skill in grade school at around eight years old. He loved drawing and creating in-class projects, but he told me his favorite project was doing clay. In class he discovered Picasso’s art and fell in love with the style. Paul’s family recognized his love for the arts as well as his talents.

“When I was young I needed a reference of some images or objects to draw but as time went by I found I could construct the idea from memory. This took me years to develop. Some artists have this talent already down: The ability to see an image in your mind and hold that one image in the mind’s eye for a constant period of time, and even rotate the image to recreate the art in any form. Every artist comes to their talent in different ways, some people have it naturally from birth and others discover it at 50, and even 70. When art is found or rediscovered in one’s life, it really opens things up for personal change,” Paul said.

Paul told me as a young artist he used to enjoy shows like Rick and Morty cartoons, as well as other cartoons. “For me, Rick and Morty along with Picasso truly transformed my

personal style. I would say I have an eclectic form of art with a hidden art form as well. I create images and some of them stand out and others are in fact hidden in the image itself. It’s fun to watch people look at my art and point out the different images hidden. I guess it’s a hidden cartoon style of art,” he said.

The way I see it is that Paul is creating images that have unseen characters. He’ll rediscover that he created something in the art that he then brings out. He draws with a pencil and then a face, or an owl, or something will pop out.

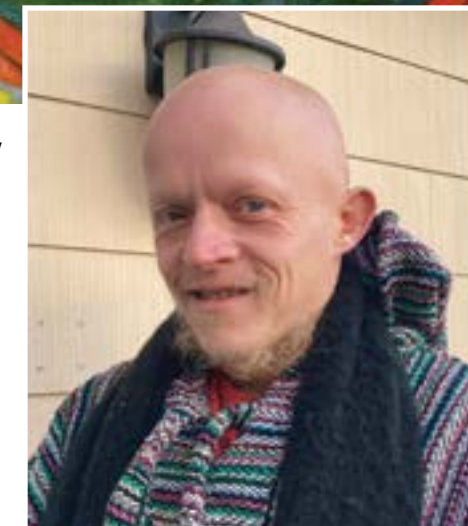
“My art form has been a real coping mechanism for me in dealing with homelessness and personal loss. It’s become a form of escapism in dealing with what I am going through,” he said. “It literally helps me escape reality.”

He continued, “What I love doing is to find a public location and just start drawing. Soon I get people to see my art, I’ll strike up a conversation and get new ideas and good comments from my work. I feel like sharing it with the world; this is one way to show my work.

“My work is very versatile. No matter what direction you turn it, it is always right side up. I would love to have my work get registered at the Library of Congress and get a copyright for my work and have my style only be what



Above: 2D colored pencil pop art by Paul Wertz, who is pictured right.



is made by me alone.”

Paul added, “I also want to create an LLC and help out in the community with art and artists.”

Paul’s works are extremely vibrant with a use of colors and contrasts from dark to light. I was totally mesmerized by it. The image jumps out at you and the more you look at it the more you get out of it.

Paul told me he has a hard time acquiring colored paints. He needs to continue his art form with drawing paper. So if anyone can help donate to Paul or bring any colored pencils, all items would be appreciated at this

time. Bring them to the Groundcover office and I will get them to him. I see his art becoming public posters and being shown to the world. I do hope he can create more art for a show this summer.

Get Around Town Easily with TheRide

TheRide offers frequent, convenient, and easy to use service in the Greater Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Area. Mobile ticketing and TheRide’s helpful rider tools makes it even easier to ride and plan your trip.

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➔ FINLAND from page 5

distributed public housing throughout the city in an effort to create areas with residents of mixed economic backgrounds. According to the Finnish government, the number of long-term homeless persons between 2008 and 2015 decreased by 35%. As of 2016, homelessness decreased for the first time to under 7,000 people (out of a population of 5.6 million people), and continued to decrease in the years after. (The Finnish government uses a definition of homelessness which includes living temporarily with family and friends.) The majority of homeless people live in Helsinki, Finland's largest city."

Granberg also referred to an article titled, "The End of Homelessness in Finland." It was published in the Journal Cityscape in 2022. She said, "According to this paper, the number of shelter and hostel beds fell from 2,121 in 1985 to 52 in 2016. In the same time, supportive housing units grew from 127 to 1,309, and rental apartments for people formerly experiencing homelessness increased from 65 to 2,433."

In January 2024, representatives of Finland's Y Foundation visited Ottawa, Canada. They were invited by the Ottawa Alliance to end

homelessness. The Y Foundation CEO noted that street homelessness in Finland is almost non-existent, and that sheltered homeless people are less than 4,000.

Conclusion

Historians have informed us that America witnessed large-scale homelessness after the Civil War and the Reconstruction period of the 1870s. The promise of 40 acres and a mule was not available to all. Another period in our history when we witnessed large-scale homelessness was during the Great Depression. The current homelessness crisis touches every major city, and every region of the country.

From 1937 to 1998, federal, state and local governments were partners in the construction and management of affordable housing. During the 1996 Presidential election campaigns, Senator Robert Dole, who was running against President Bill Clinton, condemned affordable housing construction as the "last bastion of socialism in America." Earlier in the 1980s, the Reagan Administration called for tearing down high-rise low-income housing without providing HUD with the money for replacing the lost housing stock. The Faircloth Amendment of 1998 worsened the

Federal government's ability to end homelessness and supply adequate low-income housing.

Both Finland and America are considered western democracies. Each nation has learned from the other in the past. Leaders of the Y Foundation in Finland said that housing first was tested by clinical psychologist Sam Tsembiri and his team in New York City during the 1980s. It was a success, and Finland copied that homeless solution. They implemented the housing first model and said goodbye to the Staircase Model. Finland has a national consensus on how to end homelessness and succeed in the war against poverty, the war against drug abuse and addiction, and how to provide the housing security necessary for durable mental health treatment.

It is incumbent on the U.S. Conference of Mayors to embark on cross-national comparisons of homelessness solution models that are sound and effective. They can start with the miracle of Finland. When they then lobby the U.S. President and Congress, they would be in a better position to say, "We have examples of nations that have solved their homeless crisis. Let's talk! Let's take action!! Let's make a change!!!"

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Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other

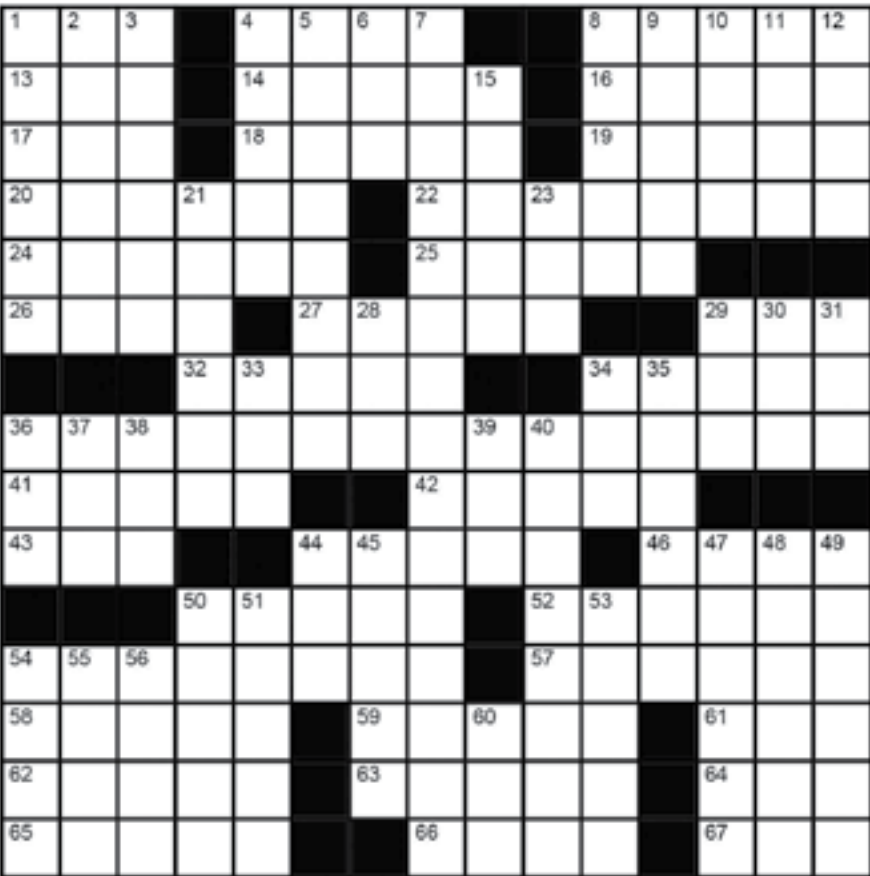
Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

CROSSWORD

from the International Network of Street Papers



ACROSS

1. Blood-typing system
4. Downer
8. Plant fungi
13. "___ a lender be"
14. ___ and aahed
16. Cliffside dwelling
17. "The Greatest"
18. Bat poo
19. Inexperienced
20. Starts eating
22. Always playing a similar role
24. Revised
25. On one's guard
26. List of food options
27. Sphere
29. "___ Loves You" (Beatles hit)
32. Kind of drive
34. Going to the dogs, e.g.
36. Text on tablets
41. Burger topper
42. Some tides
43. Cooking meas.
44. Lawman Earp
46. Attired
50. Brown ermine
52. Slips
54. Phonograph brand
57. Dutch cheese
58. It may be bid
59. Coach
61. Chit
62. Bristles
63. Nitrogen compound
64. Knight
65. Asian weight units
66. Knocked off, in a way
67. Absorbed, as a cost

DOWN

1. Wreath for the head
2. Meteor that explodes in the

atmosphere

3. Ancestry
4. Neglected calf
5. Type of bowling popular in cricket in the 1800s
6. "Bingo!"
7. Bodyguards of the British Monarch
8. Wiser
9. Compassion
10. Fertilizer compound
11. Associations
12. Mailed
15. Group's senior member
21. Building material
23. ___ green
28. Neighbor of Hung.
29. Wrath, e.g.
30. All the rage
31. Dash lengths
33. Family head
34. Babysitter's handful
35. Catch sight of
36. "Sesame Street" watcher
37. "Star Trek" rank: Abbr.
38. Nibble
39. After expenses
40. Longtime NBC show
44. Court
45. W.W. II conference site
47. Highfalutin'
48. Went to a restaurant
49. River in a Strauss waltz
50. Appropriate
51. Aligns
53. Extend, in a way
54. Gigantic
55. "I had no ___!"
56. Quote
60. Have a bug

Mory



I’m going to tell you a story. A story about Mory, Mory the Manitu. It’s a sad story, I must say. If you get weepy and runny when you hear a sad story, you should turn away.

But if you want to hear about Mory and his sad story I’ll begin my tale now.

A grander mammal you won’t find, he makes children laugh to his delight. So he follows your boat and is a joy to see. Until he crosses the path of plastic in the sea. Plastic you say? No way!

Yes, you see, the pollutants of the day find a way to put plastic in the sea, and the way is us — we’re to blame. Mory, you see, has no way to know his way of life is changing. Mory is just a big, loveable manitu with no PhD.

It’s a sad story, I know, with a sad ending! I say no — we can save money and the rest if we make the world free of plastic. Do our best to fight this evil because it is created by people.

Last words

AMY BURBARY
Groundcover contributor

Slip and fall away, sweet pain
Make your haste and leave
I have but no time to weep
And even less to grieve
Pack your bags of what has been
Then move where is no more
You will not be made to stay
As often times before
I was never right for you
And you weren't meant for me
We are simply passing ships
And that is all we'll be
This is where we say goodbye
For you and I are through
Take no rest, shove off, depart
So long, Farewell, Adieu

Rage & hate

TERESA BASHAM
Groundcover vendor No. 570

To my lil ones

In the right time,
There’s gonna be a way
For you to have peace of mind
You’ll find unconditional love
A clear head,
A warm heart,
All you gotta do is find God,
He’ll alwayz mend,
Alwayz be right by your side
You’ll learn ta think of,
And you’ll have love,
No matter how hard it is,
Or how bad the storm seems,
You’ll have that gleam,
All your rage & hate,
Will leave you and you’ll find,
Your soulmate,
And love the way you should of.

BULL (bloodied)

CHRISTOPHER ELLIS
Groundcover contributor

Luscious black fur, black Persian lamb
surround her fierce massive head,
her fierce hides a noble calm;

resolute,
strong,
limbs stamp the noisy air,
her rotund taut body the shape of the
the United States,
compass the whole universe;

Compacted in shivering sinews, nerves, and
the fleshy white meat,
her nature, her earthborn eyes
question this world of violence;

Dust, dirt muddled in blood, and sullied ivory horns
hear the voice of injustice as this
bull turns her head from side to side,
turning in her silence as the world reels
in a horrible poverty, seemly to a golden
draped matador twirling his peculiar muleta
around her head,

An estoque simulado sharp to the shoulders, blood sprays the arena
raucous naive voices are heard, sophistry rules
the dulled senses while the fierce bull is the brave
creature who shoulders...

WHIMPERING
WHIMPERING
WHIMPERING

(humanity)

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



Parts of my history

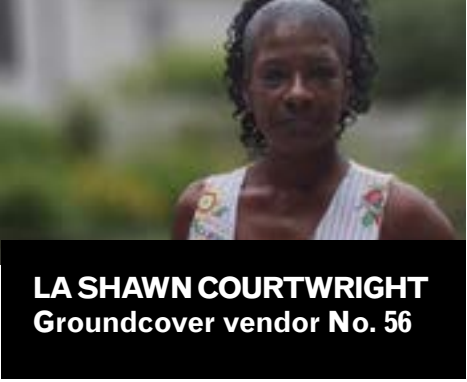
I want to share some parts of my history with you all, from when I was age three till now. I was a quiet and shy little girl. I was also a fast learner and very obedient to my parents and other adults. At age three, I learned to spell my full name, my mother’s and father’s name, my full address and phone number. My mom wanted me to know these things in case I ever got lost so I’d have a better chance of being reunited with my family.

I learned that you could also get into trouble being obedient when I was four years old and in Head Start. I was at the crosswalk to the main entrance of the elementary school that I attended and innocently stated to Blair, the safety patrol boy that lived on the same street as I did, that I was not going to listen to him because my mother taught me how she wanted me to cross the street. He took me to the principal’s office pulling me by the left shoulder part of my coat. I was made aware that that was called “insubordination.” I did not get a paddle for that because my cousin came to the office to intervene on my behalf, as she was my teacher and knew that I was just doing what I was taught. Thank God I didn’t get hit with that large piece of wood.

Around age nine, me and my cousins would go together to pass out flyers for the United Auto Workers of Michigan. One of my family members was an active participant in the activities of the UAW Hall which was on Wyoming off of McNichols Road back then. She would monitor us from her vehicle as we would return to the car to get more flyers until they all had been distributed. I reckon that that fueled my passion for canvassing which I’ll speak to further into this article.

Moving forward to my fifth grade year of elementary school, I played the leading role as Harriet Tubman, which I was very proud to play. I was also teased by some of my classmates. As we all know or learn, children can be very cruel to one another. I would cry about it at times because it made me sad and hurt my feelings, not understanding that it was really a compliment. I was in the spelling bee that year, too. Although I knew how to spell all of the words, I placed fifth in the spelling bee because when I was spelling one particular word, I looked into the audience for support and inspiration from my mom, then got nervous seeing all of those strange faces. I was glad to get off stage even though I said that I would win the spelling bee.

Joining Junior Achievement of Southeastern Michigan Division at age 15 bolstered my confidence being in a leadership role. I was voted to be the telemarketing executive of our



company. I believe that there were three other companies in our division. First step was for everyone in our company to sell our \$1 stock certificates for a 10% profit share to our investors. I decided that selling pin buttons was a great idea and my company agreed. We raised the most money from our chosen selling item for our company and won.

In June 2008 I began canvassing for Clean Water Action which protected the Great Lakes of Michigan. I was able to make my weekly quota in one day. I was so proud of myself and was awarded a scholarship to attend the canvassers conference in Paducah, Kentucky that year where I met many lobbyists that won against big industry companies. I took a lot of photos at the Canvassers Conference. The cottages we lodged in were beautiful. The one I was in had a floor to ceiling window that revealed the stunning view of a hillside where you could see the orange colored clay and the trees that grew from that orange clay. I’d never seen anything like that before. It was also the place I discovered disc golf. I hope to be able to attend another event as great as this again.

A couple years later, I’d often see the vendors selling Groundcover News around the downtown area of Ann Arbor. I was not moved by the idea of selling the paper, but I was eager to become a writer for the paper. In June 2011, I decided to go to the Groundcover office to check it out and to see if I could become a writer for the paper. I was met by volunteer Sandy Schmoker and vendor Rissa Haynes and was told that I could most certainly write for Groundcover News. I acknowledged that I mainly wrote poetry and was told I could publish my poems in Groundcover as well. I recently ran into Sandy on February 13 in downtown Ann Arbor; it was a pleasure to see her again. I miss Rissa’s warm, welcoming smile. I keep her alive in my memories of her. My first published article “No one will hear the silent voice” was published in the July 2011 issue of Groundcover.

“No one will hear the silent voice” was written in 10 minutes on the bus. I had to be somewhere, then returned to

the Groundcover office to submit my writing and my poem. I didn’t realize how much the article I wrote matched the Groundcover News mission. That confirmed my belief that being a writer for this paper was one of my callings. By this time, Susan Beckett was in the office, too. She told me, “How nice to have you with our paper.”

The first published poem I wrote in March 2004 called “Not helpless, or hopeless, just homeless” was in the July 2011 issue of Groundcover, as well. That was it for me — I’ve been publishing my works in Groundcover News since.

I received a scholarship to attend the North American Street Newspaper Association Award ceremony in Nashville, Tennessee in October 2011. There I met Tasha French, the president of NASNA, and Lee Stringer, former street paper editor in New York and author of “Grand Central Winter: Stories from the Street.” I remember me and Mr. Stringer were sitting outside of the building where the ceremony was being held, talking. I asked him about publishing my book, and expressing my concerns about it being published. He told me to just keep the faith. I met John Seiganthaler who was the long-time editor of The Tennessean Newspaper and fought for freedom of speech and consequently founded the First Amendment Center.

We lodged for four days and three nights at the Vanderbilt University dorms. That was a college experience while not being in college. The awards ceremony was held in a historical bank building. That was another experience in itself, too. I had taken pictures of the original blueprint of the building and a lot of the artwork exhibited throughout the building. Unfortunately, I lost the phone that the pictures were on and I wasn’t able to retrieve them when I purchased another device. The memories are stored in my mind, though.

In November 2011, Vickie Elmer hosted a writers workshop for the Groundcover News writers. She used to write a column for the Washington Post. I thank her for the writing skills that she taught me. I was featured on Michigan Radio in “Stories of the Homeless Writers with Kyle Norris” in January 2012. It was very fun working with Kyle on this interview. I did another interview with her before she was no longer with WUOM.

People have done things for Groundcover on my behalf like Patrick Morgan who assisted in writing the proposal for the technologies fund that was for computers and office supplies. Terri Jones from the Michigan State University Extension facilitated two anger management courses free of charge. I am proud that I impressed these people in a way that led to them offering their services to Groundcover News.

My experience on the CTN television FYI 1002 segment with Dana Denha, Lindsay Calka and myself, La Shawn Courtwright, was a challenge, but I was very proud of the way that the interview turned out. I am glad that I was able to give a broader perspective on what it is to be homeless.

I have also authored a book of poetry in November 2019 titled “The Fold-A Collection of Poetry.” It is sold at the Blackstone Bookstore located at 214 W. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti. You may also purchase it online on Barnes and Noble, E-books, Apple i-Tunes, Kindle Store, Kobo, Google Play Books, Amazon, RedShelf, Wild Rumpus, eBay, Grit City Books, iMusic.co, bookshop.org, Dymocks, Flipkart, Adlibris and elephant.md. This is an excellent read, so please get your copy as soon as possible. Thank you!

Before my accident I was learning about audio/videography, at CTN of Ann Arbor with Jamie Chiu. I was featured on Soapbox on September 26, 2022. I look forward to returning to learn radio broadcasting, TV production and about Greenroom. Hopefully I will be back at it before this year is out.

My most monumental embarkment was my plan to travel alone and to be the only female from Groundcover News to attend the Poor People’s Campaign Moral March on Washington D.C. I began my trip by train June 18, 2022, because it would take me two days to get from Ann Arbor to Union Station. Of course you have to consider there to be delays, which there were two — one in Ohio and one in Philly. Check out the beautiful pic I took of the Appalachian Mountains through the Shenandoah Valley.

I arrived at Union Station one hour before my family picked me up, and then went off to Baltimore, Md. I spent two days enjoying Curt and Star. I enjoyed going to the Inner Harbor by the Mariner watching the boats go by. On the morning of the March, I took the train back to D.C. and walked to see the Capital and the Washington Monument. I called Joe Woods and found him amongst the crowd. We then located Jay Gordon and Derek Allen and enjoyed the day and the people taking pictures. My favorite was the one in front of the African American Museum where I stood in front of the building and the fountains which sprout their own ballet.

After the exuberance and excitement of the day, what better way to spend the night than at the Garden Hill Hotel on M and Third Street? They had gorgeous rooms, a pool, washers and dryers and room service. I had to take a photo in front of the bell at Union Station!

As I hope you learned by reading this article, I am a multidimensional person with diverse interests and abilities that I like to put to good use.

Wheat berry salad with apples and cranberries

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Salad:

1 cup whole wheat berries, dry*
1 large apple, chopped
1 orange, peeled, segmented and cut into bite size pieces
½ cup dried cranberries
2 stalks green onion, thinly sliced
1 cup baby kale leaves
1 cup toasted pecans, chopped

Dressing:

3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
⅛ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground pepper

Combine dressing ingredients, whisking to combine well. In a heavy



pot cover wheat berries with water (2 inches above the wheat berries). Boil for 45 to 60 minutes uncovered. Watch carefully. Cool and drain. In a large bowl combine all of the salad ingredients except the pecans. Toss with dressing. Sprinkle with the pecans just before serving. This is so wonderful to have during the winter months!

*Wheat berries can be found in the bulk section of the People's Food Co-op

Denise Shearer



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